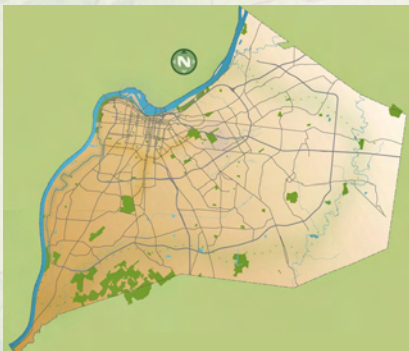


# Louisville Loop Strategic Plan

**JANUARY 2010**



**METRO  
Parks**  
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# Louisville Loop Strategic Plan

*"A more livable, attractive, mobile, efficient and environmentally sensitive community" (1).*

Cornerstone 2020, June 2000

*The Louisville Loop Trail is "an estimated 100-mile loop trail system that will ring the city and link existing and new parks and neighborhoods to civic attractions, transportation alternatives, and recreation opportunities" (1.1).*

Louisville Loop Design Guidelines, December 2009.

## Mission

The Louisville Loop connects people to a greener healthier community.

## Vision

The Louisville Loop is an essential component for the growth and prosperity of the Region. A network of shared-use paths, soft surface trails, bike lanes on roadways, stream corridors, Olmsted parkways, and transit routes, the Loop provides alternative transportation choices for residents and visitors of Louisville and the Region. The Loop celebrates the City's history and natural world through public art in its infrastructure and special places.

The Loop:

- Enhances economic development opportunities in the Loop Corridor (1/2 mile on either side of the Loop);
- Encourages smart growth in the Loop Corridor;
- Provides safe and accessible opportunities to engage in active lifestyles;
- Connects neighborhoods to each other, schools, work, retail businesses, and parks;
- Promotes the protection and appreciation of natural assets, culture, and history;
- Enhances and improves air quality and the natural environment; and,
- Offers a safe and accessible opportunity to engage in active lifestyles.

## History

Setting this vision for Louisville began in 1993 when more than 600 people worked together in a seven-year effort called Cornerstone 2020. The outcome was a call to transform our city into a community that brings people together in livable communities with a distinct sense of place. This call was heard by Mayor Jerry Abramson in 2003 as the first mayor of our merged city and county governments.

One of the transformative projects of Cornerstone 2020 was a "perimeter loop trail... along the entire length of the Ohio River... in the southwest... along Pond Creek... eastward via McNeely Park to Floyds Fork... back to the Ohio River... The loop trail should be developed as a special recreational feature which could include public art and an interpretive program designed to reveal the natural and cultural history of the County..." (85). *Parks and Open Space Master Plan, July 1995*. The Louisville Loop also would "incorporate varying types and intensity of human use, including trails for passive recreation and alternative transportation" (2). *MSD Stream Corridor/Greenway Plan, March 1995*.

In 2005 Mayor Abramson launched the CITY OF PARKS initiative with the Louisville Loop as its centerpiece along with expanding and improving parkland and environmental education. As a result of community input, the perimeter trail was named the **Louisville Loop**. An estimated 100-mile trail system, the Loop will ring the city and link existing and new parks and neighborhoods to civic attractions while providing transportation alternatives that include bike and transit access.

## Background

Prior to 2003, two sections of the Louisville Loop, the RiverWalk and the Levee Trail, were completed. In 2004, those trails were linked with both on and off-road sections. From 2005 until 2009 the focus was on planning the Loop route, identifying design/construction funding and partners, and developing trail design guidelines. In June 2009, Mayor Abramson formed a steering committee to set the strategic direction for the Loop. Over the next six months, civic and government representatives developed the LOUISVILLE LOOP STRATEGIC PLAN (**Loop Plan**) to guide the future development, care, and community support for the Louisville Loop. The central question posed to the committee was: *How does the Louisville Loop succeed as a priority alternative transportation/parks/greenways system?*

## Recommendation

A critical component of the **Loop Plan** is the formation of the **Louisville Loop Commission**. A dedicated entity is a key element that has been missing from past efforts to create a trails initiative, secure funding resources, and coordinate maintenance among agency and non-profit partners. The purpose of the Loop Commission will be to ensure the success of the Louisville Loop's mission to connect people to a greener, healthier community and to protect the integrity of the Loop Corridor.

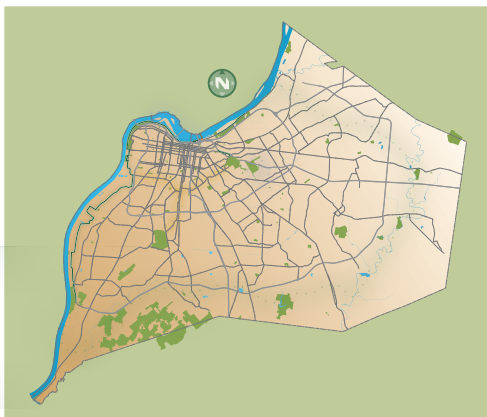


Adherence to the five imperatives as set by the strategic planning effort – community engagement, health and wellness, maintenance and conservation, smart growth, and funding and development – guarantees the long-term viability of the Louisville Loop and the Loop Commission.

The Loop Commission will be formed as a commission with Metro Parks as its lead agency. It will have a board of directors and designated Loop administrator. Parks will provide support services. The Parks Foundation has agreed to serve as the designated agent for donor funds to the Loop Commission and the Loop. The roles and responsibilities of public agency and private partners will be determined as needed by Memorandums of Understanding with Metro Parks. The Commission will advise Metro Parks and review these agreements.

It is recommended that the Louisville Loop Commission be comprised of these 13 voting members:

- a citizen representative who either works or lives near a segment of the Loop: Upper River Road (Prospect to Portland); Lower River Road (Portland to Dixie Highway at Watson Lane); Pond Creek (Dixie Highway to Bardstown Road); Floyds Fork (Bardstown Road to Shelbyville Road); Northeast (Shelbyville Road to Prospect), and the major Olmsted Parkways (Southern, Eastern Algonquin and Southwestern). Those six representatives should include a broad range of interests from cycling to economic development, to environmental issues and beyond.
- An additional citizen will be selected to serve as an at large member.
- One partner from each of the following categories: advocacy, economic development, operational (see attached organizational chart).
- Mayor or representative
- President of the Council or representative
- Metro Parks Director



The administration of the Loop Commission will work with the board to develop operating policies and procedures and to establish a committee structure that supports the strategic imperatives.

## Strategic Imperatives

*“The early goals for the Olmsted parks and parkways are not all that different than the overarching goal the city has established for the Louisville Loop: providing safe, efficient, and pleasing facilities that accommodate all levels of users and creates a more connected community” (1-1).*

Louisville Loop Design Guidelines Manual

### Build Community Support

Create and nurture a widespread belief in the community that the Louisville Loop is a defining part of the Region’s quality of life that people will be inspired to support and defend.

### Encourage Health and Wellness

Use the Loop to demonstrate and reinforce a lifestyle of health and wellness – through promoting, partnering and providing opportunities for all.

### Maintain and Protect the Loop

Ensure the Loop is maintained at the highest standards for safe public use, connectivity, recreation and transportation. Ensure stewardship of the Loop that enhances the physical and natural landscape

### Encourage smart growth around the Loop corridor

Encourage growth and development in the Loop corridor that makes effective and efficient use of our community’s resources. Ensure investment in infrastructure that respects existing and projected demands on those resources. Expand on the tradition of Louisville’s parks and parkways as a connection between the city, its people, nature and the Region.

### Ensure funding to develop and sustain the Loop

Ensure the Loop has funding for development, construction and maintenance. Position the Loop as a regional economic engine.



## Community Engagement

### Defining Statement

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Create and nurture a widespread belief in the community that the Louisville Loop is a defining part of the Region's quality of life that people will be inspired to support and defend.

### Key Initiatives

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- Develop a functioning external advocacy group, based on structure recommended by steering committee and approved by Mayor.
  - Advocacy group's focus will be directed by the strategic plan that was developed by the steering committee.
  - Ensure that an effective internal government structure exists to sustain the advocacy group.
- Develop and implement a program for public outreach and communication for the Louisville Loop.
  - Organize new events and leverage existing events to encourage use and awareness of the Loop.
- Develop partnerships with businesses, civic groups, government entities, churches, schools, and neighborhood groups to sustain and enhance the Louisville Loop through increased usage, financial support and volunteerism.

### Work Plan

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1. Recruit the advocacy group, to work as directed by the Louisville Loop Strategic Plan.
2. Develop a communication plan that identifies targets, key messages and strategies, based on the strategic plan for the Louisville Loop.
3. Develop a detailed list of potential partners, along with a strategy for connecting with them.
4. Develop a volunteer program, possibly modeled after the city's existing Adopt-A-Park program.
5. Promote and coordinate the use of the Loop as a venue for third-party organizational fundraising events, health and wellness programs, athletic competitions, and more.



## Health and Wellness

### Defining Statement

Use the Loop to demonstrate and reinforce a lifestyle of health and wellness by promoting, partnering, and providing opportunities for all.

### Key Initiatives

- Create campaigns around quality of life and active living championing achievements at individual, neighborhood, and community levels by using the Loop for walking, bicycling and other active activities.
- Ensure safe access to Loop from neighborhoods.
- Provide fun and lifestyle-oriented destinations for organizations and individuals.
- Assess the health impact of the Loop and use findings to develop key indicators for measuring future progress of the community's health and wellness.

### Work Plan

1. Work with all Healthy Hometown Movement committees to promote projects and policies around the Loop Corridor.
2. Coordinate with Healthy Kids, Healthy Community project to connect neighborhoods to Loop in its project area (12 neighborhoods in northwest and east central Louisville).
3. Initiate dialogue and seek partners (e.g. University of Louisville, Bellarmine University, Spalding, etc.) for performing a health impact assessment for the Loop with goal of identifying not only the health impacts of the areas around the Loop on future users, but also the impact on the community's health by using the Loop.
4. Compile best practices on measuring health impacts on trail usage.
5. Promote the case for health benefits for using the Loop.
6. Partner with Metro Health and Wellness to host events to raise awareness of trail use and its health benefits.
7. Develop or partner with existing incentive programs that would encourage logging mileage along the Loop, such as:
  - a. Partner with Kentuckiana Metro on the Move to help promote usage of Loop through the use of its users' challenges.
  - b. Establish central program to log miles on Loop and create incentives to encourage its use.
  - c. Install Mayor's Miles that connect to the Loop from adjacent neighborhoods to provide incentive for measuring individual progress and encourage more physical activity.





## Maintenance and Conservation

### Defining Statement

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Ensure the loop corridor is maintained at the highest standards for safe public use, connectivity, recreation, and transportation. Ensure stewardship of the corridor that enhances the physical and natural landscape.

### Key Initiatives

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- Determine the appropriate entity and organizational structure to oversee maintenance and protection of the Louisville Loop that appropriately addresses the statutory and regulatory roles of key agencies.
- Develop a general maintenance plan for the Loop that meets the goals of being cost effective, with efficient delivery of services, while protecting and enhancing the ecological integrity of the Loop.
- Ensure public safety within the Loop by developing the necessary relationships with local police, fire, and EMS and developing appropriate initiatives to engage the community to promote public safety.
- Determine conservation initiatives and partnerships that enhance and protect the loop as a provider of habitat, a vital resource connecting the community to the natural world, and that uses public art as a tool to interpret the natural world as well as to celebrate special places on the Loop.
- Develop revenue streams to maintain and operate the Louisville Loop (both operational and capital) and to ensure that Loop design standards promote efficient and cost effective maintenance and resource protection.

### Work Plan

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1. Develop a pro/con analysis of approximately five model management structures for the Louisville Loop, based upon guiding principles developed during strategic planning process and review of strengths/weaknesses of current management structure.
2. With input from other relevant sub-committees, make a recommendation of the two or three most viable management structures for report to the Mayor.
3. Approval of final management structure will dictate further work plan activities which will provide the basis for development of a draft organizational structure to include:
  - a. review regulatory requirements
  - b. review of current best management practices for selected structure
  - c. review of current and anticipated maintenance and conservation needs based upon desired standards
  - d. analysis of costs associated with anticipated maintenance and conservation needs
4. Development of a draft operational budget based upon above analysis

## Smart Growth

### Defining Statement

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Encourage growth and development in the Loop corridor that makes effective and efficient use of our community's resources. Ensure investment in infrastructure that respects existing and projected demands on those resources. Expand on the tradition of Louisville's parks and parkways as a connection between the city, its people and nature.

### Key Initiatives

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- Create incentives, guidelines and regulations as part of the development review process that support the Loop as the heart of an alternative transportation network and ensures that public and private development provides appropriate connections to the Loop with shared-use paths, sidewalks, bike lanes and transit service.
- Ensure that development of the Loop respects and celebrates the environmental constraints and natural features of the land, as well as the historic and cultural resources of the community through careful planning, design and implementation.
- Create and implement a communication plan with a focus on planning, design and construction of the Loop and nearby development that inspires growth that is seen as an asset and is valued by the community and that contributes to the overall wealth and well-being of all our citizens.

### 2010 Work Plan

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1. Develop guiding principles for development of the Loop that ensure protection and enhancement of the natural, historical and cultural features in the Loop corridor.
2. Research and recommend changes to Land Development Code regulations for review of proposed development around the Loop (within the "Loopshed"!), including, key parts of the Trail Standards Manual, design review/overlay districts, and a Greenways Plan.
3. Research and recommend public/private partnerships and funding mechanisms such as TIFs to incentivize smart growth around the Loop.
4. Develop a public relations package that includes charrettes, renderings and other planning tools to help the public understand and visualize smart growth design along the Loop.
5. Work with existing neighborhoods and new developments to include amenities near trail heads along the Loop such as farmers markets, restaurants, coffee shops, and public art.
6. Explore funding sources for planning elements of smart growth near the Loop such as Safe Routes to School.
7. Work with KIPDA, KYTC, adjacent counties and Indiana to find connections and share ideas about tourism-related economic development near the Loop
8. Review potential development sites (business, residential, employment, mixed use) so that they become enhancements to the Loop and to one another.
9. Identify potential transit nodes and bike route intersections.



## Funding and Development

### Defining Statement

Ensure the Loop has funding for development, construction and maintenance. Position the Loop as a regional economic growth engine.

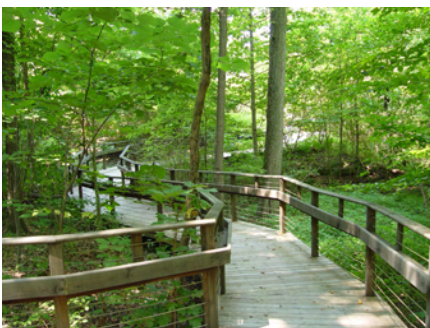
### Key Initiatives

- Identify public and private revenue sources.
- Establish the economic impact of the Loop.
- Establish relationships with city/state, non-profit agencies to explore partnership opportunities in planning, funding, and advocacy.
- Identify charitable giving opportunities.
- Encourage partnering with private developers.
- Establish a partnership with the Park Foundation.



### Work Plan

1. Set incentives for trail development/trailheads .
  - a. Sponsorship and naming opportunities, etc.
2. Explore coordinated fund raising with Parks Foundation, Olmsted, and 21st Century Parks.
3. Draft a strategy for developing and funding an economic impact study.
4. Set criteria for fund raising goals.
  - a. Identify fund raising consultant and costs.
5. Develop an inventory of potential public and private fund raising source.
  - a. Research public financing options, including TIF.
  - b. Identify and support complementary initiatives (i.e. GLI visioning effort, LCVB tourism initiatives).
  - c. Identify local, state and national grant opportunities and partners.
6. Develop a strategy for establishing partnerships (GLI, KYTC, Health Dept. neighborhood and business associations, etc.) to ensure funding and support.



## Conclusion

The Louisville Loop Commission should strive to reach the imperatives set out in the LOUISVILLE LOOP STRATEGIC PLAN: 2010. The commission shall be guided by the principles stated in the *Louisville Loop Design Guidelines, December 2010* (page 1-5), which in summary include:

- A safe and healthy environment for all users.
- Linked, connected opportunities for a system of alternative transportation and recreation facilities.
- Connections to existing trails and parkways as well as future trails.
- A venue for temporary and permanent public art as part of its aesthetic environs.
- Demonstrated principles of sustainability and environmental stewardship.
- Balance of high-quality design with cost-effective maintenance.
- An identity that is exclusive to the City of Parks Initiative while allowing variations in distinct segments.
- Celebrate, educate and highlight the uniqueness of the communities, the people, the history, the geology, and the environment.
- A catalyst for economic development throughout the city.



*The Louisville Loop  
Connects People  
to a  
Greener Healthier  
Community*

## Loop Planning Documents

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*Champions Park Master Plan* (Louisville Metro Parks), 2009

*Chickasaw Park Master Plan* (Louisville Metro Parks), 2001

*Jefferson Memorial Forest Master Plan* (Louisville Metro Parks), May 2009

*Louisville Loop Trail Standards Manual* (Louisville Metro Parks), December 2009

*Middletown-Eastwood Trail Schematic Plan* (Louisville Metro Parks), 2008

*Northeast Loop Master Plan* (Louisville Metro Parks) 2010

*Ohio River Corridor Master Plan*  
(Jefferson County Planning and Development Services, MSD and Riverfields) January 1996

*Olmsted Parks and Parkways Master Plan*  
(Louisville Olmsted Parks Conservancy and Louisville Metro Parks), 1994

*Olmsted Parkways Multi-use Path Master Plan* (Louisville Metro Parks) 2009

*Portland Wharf Park Master Plan* (Portland Museum and Louisville Metro Parks), 2002

*Portland Wharf Park Interpretive Master Plan* (Portland Museum and Louisville Metro Parks), 2008

*Pond Creek and Mill Creek Recreational Concept Plan*  
(U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Louisville Metro Parks and MSD), October 2008

*Prospect Transportation Study* (City of Prospect), 2009

*River Road Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan Draft* (Louisville Metro Public Works), 2009

*Riverview Park Master Plan* (Waterfront Development Corporation), 2005

*Riverside, Farnsley-Moreman Landing* (Farnsley-Moreman Board of Directors), 2001

*The Fork: The Floyds Fork Greenway Master Plan* (21st Century Parks, Inc.), December 2008

*U.S. 42 Widening from Harrods Creek to River Road Study* (Ky. Transportation Cabinet), 2009

## Supporting Documents

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*Cornerstone 2020 Comprehensive Plan*  
(Jefferson County Planning and Development Services), June 2000

*Complete Streets Manual* (Louisville Metro Planning and Design Services) October 2007

*Falls of the Ohio River Greenway Corridor Conceptual Master Plan* (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), 1994

*Louisville and Jefferson County Parks and Open Space Master Plan* (Louisville Metro Parks), July 1995

*Louisville Streetscape Design Manual* (Louisville Metro Planning and Design Services) 2006

*Louisville and Jefferson County Multi-Objective Stream Corridor/Greenway Play*  
(Metropolitan Sewer District), March 1995

*Ohio River Bridges Study* (Ky. Transportation Cabinet)

*Oldham County Bike and Pedestrian Trails* (Oldham County Planning and Zoning), 2008



## Committee Members

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Saeed Assef • MSD  
Sharon Bond • U.S. Corps of Engineer  
Rhonda Bozich • Metro Parks Foundation  
Jason Cissell • Louisville Metro Parks  
Joan Coleman • citizen advocate, retired, AT & T  
Christy Dooley • Louisville Public Works  
Rebecca Fleischaker • Economic Development  
Kevin Grant • Southwest Dream Team  
Lisa Hite • Louisville Metro Parks  
Althea Jackson • Office of Mayor  
Matt Kamer • Bandy, Carroll & Hellige  
Bennett Knox • Louisville Metro Parks  
Mike McClain • Wyatt, Tarrant & Combs  
Dave Neumann • Yum! Brands  
Scott Newsome • Quest Outdoors  
Mary Lou Northern • Office of the Mayor, Chair  
Steve Sizemore • Louisville Metro Planning and Design  
Tony Tomazic • Humana

## Additional Support

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Barry Alberts • City Visions Associates  
Marigny Bostock • Metro Health and Wellness  
Milana Boz • Metro Parks  
Jerry Brown • Metro Parks  
Shannon Budnick • Stockyards Bank  
Carrie Butler • TARC  
Rolf Eisinger • Louisville Bike Task Force  
Geoffrey Hobin • TARC  
David Tones • Norton Commons  
Nina Walfoort • TARC

## Louisville Loop Commission Structure

